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Committees
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Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
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The Jacobs Report

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TOOL-AND-DIE PACKAGE MOVES

Three pieces of the legislative Republican package geared toward economic stimulus cleared the House Commerce Committee this week.

The bills, HB 5245, 5247 and 5254 are just three parts of a massive legislative package aimed at bailing out the tool-an-die industry. Sent to the full House, HB 5245 would increase the maximum single business tax credit allowed for apprentice training from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for tool and die companies; HB 5247) would require boards of school districts, intermediate school districts and charter schools to provide the same access to representatives of skilled trades as universities when discussing career plans; and HB 5254 would allow the Michigan Broadband Development Authority to create grants to tool and die businesses for broadband infrastructure.

Companion legislation has already moved through the Senate, including tool-and-die tax breaks and exemptions for property taxes, specialty tools, contracts, and the creation of a tool-and-die renaissance/recovery zone. Efforts to buoy an ailing industry are well-intended, but critics wonder why tool-and-die companies should receive special treatment over other ailing sectors.

The timing of this legislation is also questionable. Michigan's budget deficit is well-documented, and the increased tax credit would take effect beginning with the 2004 tax year, reducing state revenues by \$100,000 annually (according to the House Fiscal Agency).

DETROIT SENATORS DO NOT SUPPORT MAYOR'S DEAL

Four out of the five senators representing the city of Detroit have come out against the special election deal struck Wednesday in the House. According to the plan, a \$1.5 million special election would be held in March, asking Detroit voters whether they want to return their school board's structure to its pre-1999 form or adopt a plan pitched by Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. Only Sen. Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) remains neutral on the proposal.

The deal would potentially allow Kilpatrick to personally hand-pick a powerful CEO to run the school district.

Those opposed are concerned about the prospect of a special March election that would cost approximately \$1.5 million to run and could result in an elected, but power-strapped, school board. Additionally, the Kilpatrick plan would remove the issue from the November 2004 presidential ballot, where it would get more attention and provide more incentive for Democratic voter turnout in the city.

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“I want a November election for obvious reasons,” said Sen. Burton Leland (D-Detroit). “It’s a \$1.5 million city mandate. It will be a special election. It will be very cold, probably not a lot of people turning out. If the mayor turns out a lot of his people, he can probably get his proposal to pass and the mayor needs to focus on being the mayor.”

LAWMAKERS LAUNCH HEALTHY MICHIGAN

Wednesday, state lawmakers kicked off the Healthy Michigan Caucus at a press conference in the Capitol rotunda. The legislators joined with Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, and members of the Department of Community Health, the Governor’s office, and the Michigan Public Health Institute to promote physical and fiscal health and call attention to the debilitating effects of chronic diseases on our state’s citizenry and economy.

“In Michigan, treatment of chronic diseases accounts for 65 to 70 percent of our health care costs,” said Senator Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), co-chair of the caucus. “So many chronic diseases are preventable by simply living a healthier lifestyle. If we become more physically healthy, we can eliminate some of these health care expenses and become more fiscally healthy.”

The Healthy Michigan Caucus was formed by a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators who attended a recent forum on chronic disease prevention and management. Through the forum it became clear that the fiscal health of our state depends upon the physical health of our residents.

“Michigan can lead the nation in the health of its residents and its budget if we all work together to promote healthy lifestyles,” said Senator Bev Hammerstrom (R-Temperance). “The members of the Healthy Michigan Caucus are committed to leading by example. We will work to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy state government. We hope Michigan residents will join us on this journey and challenge themselves to get more exercise, eat healthier foods, and eliminate risk factors for chronic disease from their lives.”

“All Michigan residents should take a hike,” said Sen. Jacobs, “literally.” Michigan residents who are interested in learning more about risk factors for chronic diseases or how to begin their journey to better health, can visit the Michigan Department of Community Health’s website at www.michigan.gov/mdch and click on the "Physical Health & Prevention" link.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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